



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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DOE Advisory Board Requests Endorsement of a Stewardship Workshop

The local citizens' advisory board to the Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) program has asked the agency to endorse and actively support a stewardship workshop.

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) approved sending the recommendation to DOE's Assistant Secretary for EM Inés Triay. ORSSAB is a federally appointed panel of 20 volunteers that provides advice and recommendations to DOE on its environmental cleanup program on the Oak Ridge Reservation. It is one of eight similar boards at various DOE sites around the nation.

Stewardship as it relates to environmental cleanup is concerned with monitoring and management of remediated areas where radioactive or hazardous wastes have been left in place.

The goals of the requested workshop are a renewed understanding among all participants of the responsibilities of long-term stewardship (LTS), how it will be funded, what records must be kept and where, and what immediate and long-term plans will be implemented.

"Stewardship of remediated areas where waste has been left in place is something that must be kept uppermost in the minds of governments at all levels and of the citizenry," said Ron Murphree, ORSSAB chair. "It's easy to allow these areas to become neglected because after they have been remediated they often look harmless. But some of the material buried in these waste sites can be hazardous for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. We must make sure long-term procedures and funding are available for maintenance, use/access controls, and monitoring so future generations don't unknowingly disturb these areas."

Workshop invitees would include representatives of DOE EM and Legacy Management, the eight SSABs, and state and local officials. The public would also be invited to attend. Legacy Management is the DOE department responsible for stewardship of areas where DOE operations have been closed. However, as in the case of Oak Ridge, stewardship is a responsibility at operating DOE sites as well but the path for the stewardship responsibility is less clear.

In its recommendation to Triay the board said it believed "it was time to have another national workshop to review the status of stewardship activities at closure sites and at sites with ongoing missions." The request comes near the 10-year anniversary of a similar national workshop held in Oak Ridge in October 1999.

At the 1999 workshop, participants developed Ten Next Steps for Stewardship and agreed that DOE, in cooperation with its stakeholders, must provide direction, funding, and technical support for implementation of the steps. One major component of the workshop would be to review the status of those 10 steps.

More information on the topic of long-term stewardship is available on the ORSSAB website at <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/Publications/Other.htm>. The status of a workshop will be followed in ORSSAB's newsletter The Advocate, published quarterly and also available on the website.

ORSSAB meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the DOE Information Center, 475 Oak Ridge Turnpike, and Oak Ridge, Tenn. The meetings are open to the public and an open comment period is provided.

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